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Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 20 April 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I write to you in follow-up to the letters conveyed to you over the past three weeks regarding the heightened tensions and deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Regrettably, absent serious measures of accountability, Israel, the occupying Power, has persisted with its intentional killing and injuring of Palestinian civilians, alongside all of its other illegal policies and practices propping up this illegal, half-century occupation.

For the fourth week in a row, Palestinian civilians, women, men and children, particularly in Gaza, continue to exercise their fundamental rights of expression, assembly and freedom of association in the context of peaceful protests being held as part of the six-week "Great March of Return" against the decades-long Israeli occupation, oppression and dispossession of our people.

Despite the peaceful nature of these protests, and with total disregard for international legal rules and norms, the Israeli occupying forces continue to demonstrate the cruelty of their occupation machine, responding with brutal and lethal force to the calls of unarmed civilians for freedom and justice. These actions and the military orders commanding them are being perpetrated in direct violation of international law and in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, as pointed out, inter alia, by United Nations human rights experts. In this regard, in a recent statement, they have stressed that the deaths and injuries since 30 March "appeared to be in breach of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990) and the prohibitions in the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 against wilful killings and the serious injury of the protected population", and cautioned that "the deadly use of force against demonstrators could constitute crimes under the Rome Statute".

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Today alone, as of the writing of the present letter, the Israeli occupying forces have killed four Palestinian civilians, including a child and a disabled person, and injured more than 730 people. The names of those killed are Mohammad Ayyoub, age 14, Ahmed Nabil Aqel, a disabled youth, age 25, Ahmad Rashad al-Athamna, age 23, and Saddy Abu Taha, age 32.

This brings the total number of Palestinian civilians killed since the start of the six-week Great March of Return, which began on 30 March, to 35 persons. The number of wounded and injured has now far surpassed 4,000 people, including women and children, with at least 35 of the wounded suffering life-threatening injuries and nearly 400 people suffering temporary or permanent disabilities as a result of their injuries, according to the Ministry of Health.

Not only does Israel barbarically kill disabled unarmed civilians, it also denies health care to those it injured. Last week, on 11 April, the legs of two Palestinians who were injured in recent protests were amputated after the occupying Power refused to allow them to leave the besieged Gaza Strip for medical treatment. Human rights groups had appealed to the Israeli authorities to allow for the transfer of Yusif Karnaz, age 20, and Muhammad al-Ajouri, age 17, to a hospital in the occupied West Bank for surgery that would save their limbs, given the unavailability of the required specialized surgery in Gaza. Yet, Israel admitted that the denial of travel permits was done deliberately and punitively, stating that: "The main consideration for the refusal stems from the fact that their medical condition is a function of their participation in the disturbances."

Successive declarations by Israeli officials over the past few weeks, even congratulating their military on the targeting of civilians, constitute an admission that those killings were not a result of some kind of oversight, but rather constituted a deliberate intent to violate international law, including at the highest levels.

This has led a number of Israeli soldiers to express shame and, in a letter to the editor in *The Guardian* newspaper on 12 April, to state the following:

> We, a group of former combatants who were members of sniper teams, seek to express our feelings of distress regarding the recent incidents in the Gaza Strip. As we hear about military orders permitting snipers to fire live ammunition at unarmed demonstrators, we are filled with shame and sorrow: shame at the orders devoid of moral and ethical judgment, and sorrow for the young soldiers, whom, as we know very well from our own experience, will always carry with them the scenes that they witnessed through the sights of their rifles.
>
> Instructing snipers to shoot to kill unarmed demonstrators who pose no danger to human life is another product of the occupation and military rule over millions of Palestinian people, as well as of our country's callous leadership, and derailed moral path.
>
> Harming innocent people in Gaza is part of what is needed to maintain the regime of occupation, and we must not allow it to continue. Only ceasing to militarily control the Palestinian people will bring this to an end.

At the same time, in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the occupying Power continues with its aggression against the civilian population. Today, peaceful and non-violent demonstrations were held in Al-Khalil, Ramallah, Birah, Nablus and Jericho to protest against Israel's killing of Palestinians in Gaza. As is the norm, occupying forces responded to non-violent Palestinian actions with violence, aiming tear-gas canisters, rubber-coated steel bullets and even live ammunition at civilian protesters, and causing numerous injuries.

Moreover, as we approach 15 May, Palestinians have begun more widely commemorating 70 years since the Nakba and the ongoing dispossession and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people from their homeland by Israel. In this regard, Palestinians and Israelis gathered in a field south of Haifa, near a depopulated Palestinian village whose residents were expelled in 1948. More than 20,000 people participated in this Nakba procession, indicating the broad scope and importance of these sombre commemorations.

That Israel continues to treat such commemorations with such insensitivity, disdain and even brutality is a reflection of the impunity it has for so long exploited and that has allowed it to persist with its distorted narrative, dismissive of history, of rights and of any semblance of justice. Indeed, the occupying Power has grown so accustomed to the lack of accountability and consequences for its gross, systematic and intentional commission of crimes, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, that it even now celebrates such crimes in morally repugnant and outrageous ways, once again at the highest levels.

Against this tragic backdrop, we reiterate our full support for the call by the Secretary-General, echoed by many States and organizations around the world, for an independent and transparent investigation into the killings by Israeli occupying forces of Palestinian civilians taking part in the peaceful protests. These calls need to be followed by due action to hold the perpetrators accountable and to prevent the recurrence of such crimes and the loss of more innocent lives.

As emphasized in a statement on 17 April by United Nations human rights experts, namely the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, an Israeli domestic investigation would be inadequate.

The United Nations experts have called upon the international community to establish, through the United Nations, an independent commission to investigate the events of the past three weeks, stating that:

> While Israel's announcement that it will launch a probe is welcome, we are concerned that the planned probe may lack the independence, impartiality and effectiveness required by the international law ... Coupled with reports that some Israeli officials have suggested the purpose of the investigation is to avoid scrutiny from the international community and the ICC, we believe an independent investigation is the only way to truly address what has happened in Gaza, and to prevent its recurrence.
>
> Accountability is imperative when the fatal shooting of demonstrators by security forces has occurred ... If Israel will not take credible and effective steps to investigate, and indeed, where it has congratulated its military forces for their use of force, then the international community must fill the investigatory void to ensure respect for international law.

Furthermore, in this regard, Israeli human rights organization, B'Tselem, has stated that:

> The military's announcement that the general staff investigation mechanism led by Brig. Gen. Motti Baruch will look into the incidents in which Palestinians were killed, focusing on civilian deaths, is pure propaganda, intended — among

other things — to prevent an independent international investigation. This mechanism is part of the whitewashing toolkit that the MAG Corps uses to create a semblance of an efficient law enforcement system that works to uncover the truth and ensure accountability.

In addition to the recent violence perpetrated against them, we must note that the Palestinian people in Gaza continue to simultaneously experience tremendous human-inflicted suffering, as a result of 11 years of an Israeli-imposed land, sea and air blockade and over 50 years of occupation as well as repeated Israeli military aggressions against them. As the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator, Jamie McGoldrick, stated in a recent press release: "The current surge in humanitarian needs is a crisis on top of a catastrophe. ... As we approach another Friday of demonstrations near the perimeter fence between Gaza and Israel, it is critical that the Israeli authorities exercise the utmost restraint in the use of force for law enforcement operations, in line with their obligations under international law." We reiterate our grave concerns in this regard and once again call for the immediate lifting of the illegal, punitive and inhumane Israeli blockade on Gaza.

We also reiterate our demands for the international community to condemn unequivocally Israel's criminal and illegal actions against the Palestinian people. The international community must act to ensure accountability, including by prosecuting Israeli officials who have ordered the use of unlawful lethal force abroad as a matter of universal jurisdiction, or in international judicial forums. Israel must be held fully accountable for all of its crimes, including the killings of innocent Palestinian civilians in accordance with international law and the principles of justice.

Moreover, we reiterate our call upon the international community, in particular the Security Council, to uphold its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and to implement its legal obligation to ensure the protection of civilians, for this obligation has clearly been abdicated by Israel, the occupying Power. As we have stated in the past, the Palestinian people cannot remain the exception to the international commitments to and obligations under international law, including the obligation to protect civilians from atrocities and grave breaches. Peace and security can only ever be achieved if the law is upheld and human rights are respected, but never in their absence.

This letter is in follow-up to our 631 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 13 April 2018 (A/ES-10/776-S/2018/365), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations

United Nations A/ES-10/778–S/2018/400

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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 27 April 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Just one day after the Security Council open debate on "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question", I am compelled to write to you again as Israel, the occupying Power, continues with its intentional killing and injuring of Palestinian civilian protesters in the Gaza Strip, demonstrating further its complete disregard for the rule of law, United Nations resolutions and basic norms of morality.

For the fifth week in a row, unarmed, defenceless Palestinian civilians have taken part in the "Great March of Return", a peaceful protest largely involving sit-ins, concerts, sports games, speeches and other peaceful activities. These protests, launched on 30 March and set to culminate on 15 May, the seventieth anniversary of the Nakba, are calling for the right of return of Palestine refugees to their homes and towns, demanding an end to Israeli occupation, siege and dispossession, and calling for Palestinian independence and freedom.

The demonstrators are also protesting the Israeli blockade of Gaza and the unbearable conditions of life there, where 2 million Palestinians, the majority of whom are refugees, have been subjected, for over a decade, to an illegal Israeli land, sea and air blockade that has vastly compounded the misery and suffering inflicted on the Palestinian people by five decades of Israeli military occupation, since 1967, and seven decades of dispossession and denial of their right of return to their homes and ancestral lands, since their ruthless uprooting in the Nakba of 1948.

While it is natural for any oppressed peoples to rise up against injustice and seek freedom, and while it is honourable for them to do so peacefully, Israel has clearly instructed its soldiers to respond to these demonstrations with lethal violence against the civilian protesters for daring to reject and challenge the occupation and its persecution. This systematic and widespread targeting of unarmed civilians is deplorable and illegal, constituting war crimes and crimes against humanity.

This has led United Nations bodies, human rights organizations and States worldwide to speak out. Earlier today, Amnesty International referred to Israel's

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actions as "a murderous assault against protesting Palestinians, with its armed forces killing and maiming demonstrators who pose no imminent threat to them". In a press release today, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, stated, "images of a child being shot as he runs away from Israeli security forces are downright shocking", referring to the case of Mohammad Ayyoub, age 14, who was killed by a bullet to the head on 20 April.

Today alone, the Israeli occupying forces have killed three Palestinian civilians and injured more than 830 people, inflicting more devastation on families in Gaza and further overwhelming the health sector and emergency services, the capacities of which are already severely depleted after more than a decade of Israeli blockade. This brings the total number of Palestinian civilians killed since the protests began on 30 March to 44.

The casualties include Tahrir Mahmoud Said Wahbah, a deaf teenager aged 18, who died on 23 April from injuries sustained when he was shot in the head on 13 April while standing 150–200 metres away from Gaza's border with Israel in Khan Younis, and Abdallah Muhammad Jibril al-Shamali, age 20, who died on 22 April, two days after being shot in the abdomen by an Israeli sniper, east of Rafah in southern Gaza.

Journalists also continue to be attacked by the occupying forces. Ahmad Abu Hussein, a photojournalist, age 24, died on 25 April, succumbing to injuries sustained while covering protests on 13 April, when he was shot through the abdomen while wearing clearly marked press gear, in grave breach of international law and in violation of Security Council resolution 1738 (2006). As many as 66 journalists have been injured during the demonstrations held so far. Moreover, in a letter to the Israeli Prime Minister, the Committee to Protect Journalists noted that, since most of the journalists shot since 30 March were wearing vests marked "PRESS" at the time of injury, "the shootings suggest that Israeli authorities could be trying to suppress media coverage of the protests".

The deliberate targeting of athletes also continues, with six Palestinian athletes targeted since the protests began. Mohammad Khalil Obeid, a Palestinian football player, age 23, while posing no threat whatsoever, was shot in both knees on 30 March by Israeli soldiers. Alaa al-Dali, age 21, a cyclist who had been training for months to compete in the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia, was shot in the leg on 30 March and then punitively denied a permit to leave Gaza for medical treatment in the West Bank, resulting in the amputation of his leg.

The injuries sustained by protesters have been "horrific", likely to leave many of them with permanent disabilities, according to doctors at the European and Shifa hospitals in Gaza City. The director of the emergency department at Shifa, Gaza's largest hospital, stated that most of the casualties were "wounded by live ammunition, mostly shot in the lower limbs, crushing large parts of the bones, cutting into veins, nerves and muscles, and losing skin in the injured area".

The humanitarian group Médecins sans frontières has also observed "unusually severe and devastating gunshot injuries" since the protests began. Furthermore, the charity stated on 26 April that: "Half of the more than 500 patients we have admitted in our clinics have injuries where the bullet has literally destroyed tissue after having pulverized the bone. These patients will need to have very complex surgical operations and most of them will have disabilities for life." The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator, Jamie McGoldrick, also stated on 26 April that "over the course of four Fridays of demonstrations, far more Palestinians have been injured in the Gaza Strip than in the preceding three years combined".

Moreover, a spokesperson for Amnesty International has said that: "The nature of these injuries shows that Israeli soldiers are using high-velocity military weapons

designed to cause maximum harm to Palestinian protesters that do not pose imminent threat to them. These apparently deliberate attempts to kill and maim are deeply disturbing, not to mention completely illegal."

While Gaza's health sector is struggling to cope with this mass influx of casualties, Israel is compounding the severe challenges being faced by deliberately attacking paramedics and their equipment. Nearly 80 medics have been injured during the protests, including 5 by live fire, and 20 ambulances have been damaged by Israeli fire.

In addition, repeated declarations by Israeli officials over the past weeks amount to open admissions that killing unarmed civilian protesters, who pose no objective threat, is their policy and intent.

In a radio interview, Israeli Brigadier-General (Reserve) Zvika Fogel confirmed this premeditated, deliberate policy, stating that when snipers stationed along Israel's boundary with Gaza shoot at children, they are authorized to do so under clear and specific orders. "I know how these orders are given. I know how a sniper does the shooting. I know how many authorizations he needs before he receives an authorization to open fire. It is not the whim of one or the other sniper who identifies the small body of a child now and decides he'll shoot. Someone marks the target for him very well and tells him exactly why one has to shoot and what the threat is from that individual ..."

Such statements are not an aberration, but rather represent Israeli policy at the highest levels. They are also consistent with the incitement by Israeli officials as regards Palestinian children in other contexts. On 21 April, Israeli lawmaker Bezalel Smotrich published a tweet expressing that he was "very sad" that Palestinian child prisoner Ahed Tamimi is in jail because she "should have gotten a bullet, at least in the kneecap", adding that "that would have put her under house arrest for the rest of her life". Twitter temporarily suspended Smotrich's account and the tweet was deleted, but Smotrich said that he "stands behind every word in that tweet", insisting that deterrence is "attained through a balance of terror which is based on our capabilities, on draconian and disproportionate punishment — house demolitions, deportation of families, etc."

A report by Human Rights Watch also confirms that Israel's lethal violence against Palestinians demonstrating during the launch of the Great March of Return was premeditated and "planned at [the] highest levels of the Israeli government". Human rights groups Adalah and Al Mezan have also gathered evidence of 12 videos published on social media showing unarmed protesters, including women and children, being shot by Israeli occupying forces, with some people shot while waving the Palestinian flag or running away from the fence.

Moreover, in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General, Israeli human rights non-governmental organization B'Tselem states that the horrific casualty figures in the context of the Great Return March "are the predictable outcome of the manifestly illegal rules of engagement implemented during the demonstrations, of ordering soldiers to use lethal gunfire against unarmed demonstrators who pose no mortal danger", and pointed to Israel's political leadership, in particular the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Defence Minister, Avigdor Lieberman, and the army chief of staff, for bearing "responsibility for these fatal outcomes".

In this regard, we reiterate the call by the Secretary-General, echoed by many States, including in yesterday's open debate of the Security Council, and by organizations around the world, for an independent and transparent investigation into the killing of Palestinian civilians by the Israeli occupying forces. These calls need to be followed by due action to hold the perpetrators accountable and prevent the

recurrence of such crimes and the loss of more innocent life, through the launching of an international mechanism that will ensure a legitimate investigation rather than another Israeli whitewash.

Against this backdrop of criminal activity in Gaza, the occupying Power, Israel, has persisted with its deliberate, systematic and gross violations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

In this regard, ongoing violations of international law include home demolitions, forced evictions of families and communities, discriminatory land confiscation, the fragmentation of the territory and imposition of an apartheid regime, and the imprisonment, detention and torture of thousands of Palestinians, including 350 children, 62 women and 6 parliamentarians, in Israeli jails. Moreover, Israel continues to build the illegal wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to violate the sanctity and historical status of Jerusalem, all in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations resolutions and all human rights instruments, amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Israeli settlers also continue to ruthlessly terrorize Palestinian civilians, with a weekly average of five attacks since the beginning of 2018.

Israel continues its colonization schemes, enacted and maintained by Israeli officials at all levels, combined with explicit statements by Israeli politicians calling for the annexation of the West Bank. Between 10 and 23 April alone, occupying forces demolished or seized 16 structures in six localities in Area C, affecting the livelihoods of at least 362 people. Israel issued at least 19 demolition and stop-work orders against structures belonging to three communities in Area C.

The persistence of this situation for decades, without remedy or accountability, has inflicted immense suffering on the Palestinian people. That we are entering the fifty-first year of this belligerent colonial occupation is outrageous and unacceptable.

The international community must not remain silent in the face of such blatant crimes, and the urgency of action cannot be overstated. On 26 April, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, warned the Security Council that "Gaza is about to explode" and stressed the urgency of collective international action to avert further disaster and to salvage peace prospects. It is incumbent on the Council to speak with one voice to condemn these crimes, demand their cessation, including a full lifting of the blockade, demand an investigation and ensure protection for the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in accordance with international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and relevant resolutions.

While the Palestinian people are determined to continue using non-violence to call for their rights, we urge the international community to encourage them and show them that their calls are heeded, not to send them the message that non-violence, international law and the international system will not help them in their quest for their inalienable rights and the realization of long-overdue freedom, justice and independence.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 631 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432–S/2000/921) to 20 April 2018 (A/ES-10/777–S/2018/377), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being

committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

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(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations

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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 4 May 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I regret that I must once again write to you regarding the dire situation being borne by the Palestinian people under Israel's illegal, belligerent military occupation.

Conditions remain critical in the Gaza Strip, where Palestinian civilians peacefully protesting against this inhumane occupation continue to be subject to attack by the Israeli occupying forces. As even more suffering is being inflicted on this vulnerable and besieged population, hopes are further diminishing, and this loss of hope is especially prevalent among our youth. This has been reported widely, including in a 29 April piece by The New York Times reflecting on the recent protests and quoting a 22-year-old Palestinian youth — who is unemployed and whose family is struggling with the impoverishment and collective punishment imposed on the entire population — referring to the situation as so unbearable that: "Death or life — it's the same thing".

Today's developments only reinforce this sense of despair and anger in the face of this ruthless occupation. Yet again, the occupying forces have chosen to respond with military force in Gaza against unarmed Palestinians engaged in non-violent protests in the context of the Great March of Return — launched on 30 March 2018 in view of the impending seventieth anniversary of the Nakbah — causing more civilian casualties.

As of the writing of the present letter, it is being reported that more than 1,100 people have been injured, including at least 82 people shot and wounded by live ammunition. Since the protests began on 30 March, 49 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This includes the killing of a 15-year-old boy, Azzam Oweida, who was shot in the head by Israeli soldiers during last Friday's protests and who died the following day of his injuries, as well as the killing of three Palestinians near the Gaza-Israel border on Sunday, 29 April.

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The number of Palestinian civilians wounded and injured since the protests began has now surpassed 7,000, with many suffering critical injuries, which are exacerbated by the health crisis in Gaza. The difficulties in the treatment of the wounded have also been gravely compounded by the type of ammunition being used by Israel, the occupying Power, against our civilian population. This includes the use of explosive bullets, such as "butterfly bullets", which explode upon impact, destroying tissue, arteries and bone and causing severe internal injuries. The use of such weaponry and the massive body wounds and bone and tissue damage it is causing has led to increased incidences of limb amputation and permanent disability among injured Palestinians and, in several cases, death from the severity of the wounds.

As tensions continue to rise and humanitarian and security conditions to deteriorate, the urgency of addressing this dire situation and bringing it back from the brink cannot be understated. This message was repeatedly conveyed to the Security Council by one delegation after another at the open debate held recently, on 26 April, and it is a message we convey once again today. Time is of the essence and the international community must act without delay.

The international community, including the Council, must act, in line with international legal obligations, including the relevant United Nations resolutions, for the sake of protecting the Palestinian civilian population under Israel's foreign occupation, ensuring accountability and salvaging the prospects for peace and security before the downward spiral crosses the point of no return. In this regard, delegations addressing the Council also clearly underscored that the question of Palestine remains at the heart of the instability in the Middle East and that a just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains the key to peace.

Absent measures of accountability, it is clear that Israel will persist with its unlawful blockade and deliberate attacks on Palestinian civilians in Gaza and the escalation of its other violations in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, with total impunity. The occupying Power is flagrantly ignoring the international community's calls, including at the highest levels, for restraint and compliance with the law, including its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and all provisions relevant to the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Moreover, the Israeli Government continues to incite against the Palestinian people, and occupying forces continue to shoot, kill and injure unarmed Palestinian civilians, including children, engaged in peaceful, non-violent protest and not posing any threat at all.

Repeated statements by Israeli officials clearly indicate such aggression against our civilians to be part of an intentional, systematic policy, designed, commanded and implemented to inflict as much loss and punishment on the Palestinian people as possible, including death and permanent disability. How else can one explain the designation of an entire civilian population, over half of them children, as a target for attack, as was done by Israeli Minister Avigdor Lieberman, who has openly declared that "there are no innocent civilians in Gaza"? Echoing this shameful mindset, the so-called Science and Technology Minister of Israel, in referring to civilian protesters in Gaza, stated: "He is not an innocent civilian who is coming to seek peace. I'm sure of that."

Such wilful targeting of civilians is outright terrorism; it constitutes a grave breach of international humanitarian, human rights and criminal law. For all of these crimes, there must be accountability.

We thus reiterate our call for an independent, transparent, international investigation into these crimes being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the killing and injuring of peaceful

civilian protesters, as called for by the United Nations Secretary-General and countless other States and international organizations.

In this regard and in relation to the recent announcement by the Israeli Government of the intention to launch an investigation, we must also reiterate that Israeli domestic investigations into crimes perpetrated by the occupying forces against Palestinians are wholly inadequate. Even Israeli human rights organizations concur on this point. As noted on 26 April by the Executive Director of the Israeli organization B'Tselem: "Extensive past experience clearly demonstrates that the recently announced Israeli 'investigation' of some of these fatalities is nothing more than a whitewash mechanism. It is part of a facade designed to give the impression that Israel is abiding by its legal obligation to investigate. Recent statements by Israeli officials indicate that the announcement was only made in an attempt to forestall and prevent investigations by international bodies."

Moreover, it is clear that the illegal Israeli military courts that try Palestinians — including the only juvenile military court in the world — are illegitimate, established only to sustain the occupation and not to achieve justice. This is confirmed by the fact that all segments of the Palestinian people have been subject to arrest, including children, women, human rights defenders, journalists, parliamentarians, and, of course, men and young males, who are the primary targets. This has been compounded by an astounding conviction rate, which stands at over 99 per cent, a rate which is only achieved by the persistent abuse by Israel of its obligations as an occupying Power and of fair trial rights.

That Israel's military courts operate in breach of international law has been confirmed by, inter alia, the former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, the United Nations independent fact-finding mission on Israeli settlements, and Human Rights Council treaty bodies. As stated recently by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: "Israel's failure to consistently prosecute violations committed by members of its security forces, encourages them to use deadly force against their fellow unarmed human beings, even when they present no threat."

The fact that Israel's military investigation system whitewashes crimes against Palestinians has also been yet again reconfirmed by the recent sentencing on 25 April of Israeli policeman Ben Dery, who shot and murdered unarmed Palestinian teenager Nadeem Nuwara on 15 May 2014, following a peaceful civilian demonstration to mark the Nakbah. After nearly four years of pursuing justice, the Nuwara family felt their wound was deepened by the nine-month prison sentence given to Dery for this blatant war crime. In stark contrast to that absurd sentence, Palestinian child Ahed Tamimi, who confronted an Israeli soldier who invaded her home in the occupied West Bank, remains in jail, being forced to serve an eight-month sentence.

These cases are only two of the countless such injustices endured by the Palestinian people under more than a half-century of this criminal occupation. Moreover, they reflect the double standard prevailing, wherein outrageous sentences are handed down against Palestinians by Israeli military courts, while Israeli soldiers and extremist settlers are permitted to harm and terrorize Palestinian civilians with complete impunity. In this regard, referring to the case of Nadeem Nuwara, a spokesperson for Defence for Children International has stated: "Despite clear and overwhelming video, spatial and sound forensic analysis showing Ben Dery intentionally killed Nuwara [...] The lenient sentence announced today is not surprising and illustrates how pervasive and entrenched denial perpetuates impunity even where video evidence shows Israeli forces intentionally killing children."

As we continue to bear witness to the crimes of this malicious, illegal Israeli occupation, including the carnage being perpetrated against our people in Gaza, we

must again call on the international community to ensure protection for the Palestinian people. International law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and the relevant United Nations resolutions must be upheld, without exception. We urge the Security Council to act on its responsibilities in this regard and appeal to all States to fulfil their legal obligations, including to respect and ensure respect for the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This is an urgent matter and is central to preserving international rules, norms and moral standards in all cases and to salvaging the chances for a just peace.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 632 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 27 April 2018 (A/ES-10/778-S/2018/400), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

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(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations

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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 11 May 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I am compelled to write to you once again, for the seventh week in a row, as unarmed, defenceless Palestinian civilian peaceful protesters participating in the "Great March of Return" in the Gaza Strip and throughout the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, continue to be targeted and brutally shot dead by Israeli occupying forces. It is clear that, absent serious measures of accountability, Israel, the occupying Power, will continue, as it has over the past six weeks, to kill and injure Palestinian civilians with complete impunity. The international community must no longer remain silent in the face of such blatant crimes committed by the occupying Power against the unprotected and defenceless Palestinian population that it holds hostage under its 50-year occupation.

As of the writing of the present letter, the Israeli occupying forces have today killed one more Palestinian civilian, Jabr Salem Abu Moustafa, age 40, and injured more than 730. Moreover, on 3 May, Anas Shawqi Abu Aser, age 19, succumbed to critical injuries that he had sustained in east Gaza City on 27 April at the hands of Israeli occupying forces. Moreover, on 7 May, Israeli forces killed Bahaa Abdel Rahman Qadih, age 23, and Mohammed Khaled Abu Rida, age 20, in east Khuza'ah town, located in east Khan Yunis city.

The latest casualties bring the total number of Palestinians who were killed for daring to raise their voices to protest Israel's systematic violation of their human rights, as well as to demand an end to occupation, siege and dispossession, and to call for independence, freedom and return to their ancestral lands since the six-week Great March of Return began on 30 March, to at least 45, including children and journalists. It should be noted that the majority of those killed were refugees whose families had been displaced from their homes and lands during Israel's ethnic cleansing campaign in the 1948 Nakbah.

Moreover, the number of Palestinians wounded and injured throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory since the protests began has now surpassed more than

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6,800. Of those injured, more than 1,900 had been shot with live ammunition and many are in serious or critical condition. The injuries sustained by protesters have been horrific, likely to leave many of them with permanent disabilities, according to doctors at the European and Shifa hospitals in Gaza City. The director of the emergency department at Al-Shifa, Gaza's largest hospital, stated that most of the casualties had been wounded by live ammunition, mostly shot in the lower limbs, crushing large parts of the bones, cutting into veins, nerves and muscles, and losing skin in the injured area. At least 28 Palestinian civilian protesters have lost limbs as a result of Israeli sniper fire.

The mass influx of casualties, compounded by more than a decade of Israel's illegally imposed blockade and the targeting of paramedics and ambulances by Israel, the occupying Power, have left essential health services in Gaza barely able to function. Since 30 March, there have been nearly 5,000 hospitalized injuries, with an additional 4,255 treated in field medical trauma stabilization points. Here, we also appeal to all States to continue their vital humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, especially during the medical emergency in Gaza, where the health sector is coping with the mass influx of casualties, and to increase their support, if possible, to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which, beyond humanitarian aid, stands for hope and respect for rights and dignity, so crucial in the absence of a solution and amid growing despair and uncertainty about the future.

Against this backdrop of criminal activity in Gaza, Israel, the occupying Power, has also continued to persist in its deliberate, systematic and gross violations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This includes the continuation of its colonial settlement enterprise, implemented through, inter alia, the demolition of Palestinian homes and structures, the confiscation of Palestinian land, the forcible transfer of Palestinian families and communities, the construction of settlements and transfer of its citizens thereto, the encouragement and condoning of settler violence and terror, and the fragmentation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory through segregated roads, checkpoints and the illegal Wall.

In this regard, Israel recently published new military orders and decisions to facilitate settlement activity on Palestinian land. The Bedouin community in Khan al-Ahmar has been threatened with forcible transfer to the "Ayn Shams" area, near Abu Dis, in order to make way for the expansion of settlements. The so-called Zandberg Committee has proposed to "legitimize" thousands of settlement units built on private Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank. Israel is also working to rehabilitate a wide road network linking the settlements in the West Bank with occupied Jerusalem in an attempt to consolidate the annexation of the "Ma'ale Adummim" settlement bloc in the West Bank. Israeli forces have bulldozed scores of dunums of Palestinian land to make way for the expansion of settlements, including agricultural land in Asirah al-Qibliyah village, south of Nablus, in order to expand the settlement "outpost" affiliated with the Yitzkhar settlement, and lands planted with olive and forest trees in the town of Kafr al-Dik, in Salfit, with a view to expanding the "Ata Zahav" settlement.

Heinous crimes by Israeli settler terrorists also continue unabated. Only this morning at dawn, a group of Israeli settler terrorists set ablaze the home of the Dawabsheh family in the village of Duma, in the West Bank, breaking a window and throwing a Molotov cocktail inside before fleeing the scene. The eldest son, Ahmed, only 6 years old, was severely injured, with burns all over his body. In July 2015, the same Ahmed suffered severe burns after Israeli terrorist settlers threw firebombs into his family's home, burning alive an 18-month-old baby, Ali, as he slept in his bed and severely burning his mother and father, Reham and Sa'ad, who later died from their wounds, leaving Ahmed orphaned.

As Israeli settlers continue their rampages, terrorizing and traumatizing Palestinian families, we call again for immediate measures to hold accountable all settlers committing crimes against the Palestinian people. Impunity for Israeli settlers cannot continue to be the norm, and the international community must demand that Israel uphold its obligations to investigate all such crimes and hold the perpetrators accountable. Terrorism in all its forms must be unequivocally condemned and ceased.

Meanwhile, Israel is trying to keep the international community from witnessing its illegal practices against the Palestinian people by continuously resorting to distortions of reality through propaganda and by denying human rights organizations access to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This week, Israel decided to deport a Human Rights Watch official for reporting on human rights violations in areas under Israeli control. As expressed in a statement by 16 Israeli human rights groups this morning, in solidarity with Human Rights Watch, "Rather than trying to hide the occupation from the world — end the occupation".

In the light of Israel's ongoing premeditated killing and maiming of unarmed protesters in Gaza, we must again call upon the international community to ensure protection for the Palestinian people. International law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and the relevant United Nations resolutions, must be upheld without exception. We urge the Security Council to act on its responsibilities in this regard and also appeal to all States to fulfil their legal obligations, including to respect and ensure respect for the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Moreover, we continue to call for an independent and transparent international mechanism in order to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice and also to avert further bloodshed among the innocent civilian population in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Moreover, the broader historical context must be addressed. The international community must ensure respect for international law by compelling Israel to bring its decades-long occupation, siege, oppression and dispossession of the Palestinian people to an end. The voices of the peaceful Palestinian protesters in Gaza, as of those of peoples of conscience worldwide, must be heard and heeded for the sake of peace, security, freedom, dignity and basic humanity.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations

United Nations A/ES-10/781–S/2018/458

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Security Council

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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 14 May 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I write to bring to your urgent and immediate attention the horrific situation unfolding on the ground in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, due to the escalation of Israel's illegal actions, including targeted attacks against the Palestinian civilian population, and the mounting casualties and tensions.

In particular, the occupying Power continues to intensify its military attacks against the civilian population in the besieged Gaza Strip in grave breach of international law, including international humanitarian law and the relevant provisions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The level of death and injury inflicted on Palestinian civilians by the Israeli occupying forces in the Gaza Strip has surpassed merely immoral, inhumane and unlawful behaviour to constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, for which Israel must be fully held accountable.

The international community must no longer allow such carnage to be perpetrated against our people with impunity; our repeated pleas for international protection for the defenceless Palestinian people must no longer be ignored. Our people are defenceless and in desperate and urgent need of international protection and the protection of international law, which is being grossly, egregiously and systematically violated by the occupying Power.

As we write this letter, more than 38 Palestinian civilians, including at least six children, have been killed today by the Israeli occupying forces, and more than 2,000 civilians have been injured, many of them critically wounded by the barbaric forms of ammunition being deliberately used against them by the occupying Power. Tragically, this massacre raises the total number of Palestinian civilians killed to more than 80 since the six-week Great March of Return began on 30 March.

The escalation of Israel's aggression against the Gaza Strip, where unarmed Palestinian civilians at the Gaza border exercising their legitimate right to protest against this inhumane and absolutely illegal occupation continue to be wilfully

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attacked and murdered by the Israeli occupying forces, threatens to further destabilize the situation on the ground and to ignite yet another round of deadly violence by Israel. We call on the international community, with the United Nations Security Council at the forefront, to act immediately in accordance with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law to address this deepening crisis and prevent the complete destabilization of this situation.

In this regard, it must be stated that in the backdrop to the violence and volatility we are witnessing today is the provocative and illegal decision by the United States administration to officially move its embassy from Israel to the City of Jerusalem. This action — which is in blatant contravention of Security Council resolutions, including, inter alia, resolutions 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 2334 (2016), and of the unequivocal prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force — has severely aggravated tensions and sensitivities, particularly at this time when the Palestinian people are marking the seventieth anniversary of their Nakbah, an ongoing tragedy whose wounds are deep and painful and continue to be deepened.

As a global and leading power, the United States had the ability to pressure Israel to end its violations against the Palestinian people, to respect international law and to create an environment that could break the political deadlock, bringing an end to Israel's 50-year occupation, and ensure a future of peace, security, prosperity and dignity for both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. Regrettably, rather than doing so, it has only continued to foster Israel's intransigence and impunity, shielding it from international censure and any real measures to bring this illegal situation and injustice to an end.

This latest action by the United States in Jerusalem has clearly and dangerously emboldened the right-wing Government in Israel to carry out its illegal policies and practices, including the murder of innocent civilians in broad daylight, without any fear of consequence, and emboldens it to further consolidate its control and unlawful de facto annexation of the City, along with the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this regard, we must recall the Security Council's unambiguous call on "those States that have established diplomatic missions at Jerusalem to withdraw such missions from the Holy City", as well as its determination that it "will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations".

We call for respect of the Council's authority and decisions. These are facts and legislation that cannot be disregarded or ignored, regardless of political pretexts and illogical justifications. Moreover, we call for respect of the historic status quo at Jerusalem's holy sites, including at Haram al-Sharif, which continues to be subjected to provocations and incitement by Israeli extremists, as witnessed again just yesterday when Israeli extremist settlers broke into the Aqsa Mosque compound in large numbers under the protection of Israeli occupying forces and raised Israeli flags on the compound, provoking clashes with Muslim worshippers and Islamic Waqf guards there.

The unfolding situation makes it clear that, in word and deed, today's action by the current United States administration is not just inflaming an already volatile situation and provoking reckless violence, but also has the potential to further inflame religious sentiments of religious extremists, fuelling violent radicalism and strife in the region and beyond, with far-reaching repercussions. In the light of this extremely regrettable action as well as the unfolding dangerous situation on the ground, we call on the international community, in particular the Security Council, to address this critical matter without delay and to act swiftly to uphold its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, reaffirming the validity of the relevant resolutions and demanding full respect for them.

We call on all States to reject all of these illegal actions and to insist on respect for international law and the relevant resolutions, and to act in accordance with their legal obligations in this regard. This must include condemnation of Israel's illegal and criminal behaviour vis-à-vis the Palestinian people under its foreign occupation, and rejection and non-recognition of its colonization of our land and of attempts by any other States to entrench and support this entirely illegal situation.

First and foremost, however, we must urgently call on the Security Council to act now and make its voice heard to stop the carnage being perpetrated against our people, particularly now at this moment in the Gaza Strip. The Council must act on its responsibilities under the Charter to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, including of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This is an urgent matter and is central to preserving international rules, norms and moral standards in all cases, to saving innocent civilian lives and to preventing the collapse of this situation so as to salvage whatever slim chances may remain for a just peace. To this end, it is urgent and imperative that the Palestinian people under Israel's occupation be protected in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law.

Once more, given the extremely dangerous situation, we appeal to the Security Council to act urgently to avert the further destabilization of this extremely fragile situation, with due consideration for this sensitive juncture in the plight of the Palestinian people in the light of more than 50 years of the Israeli foreign occupation of their land and the marking, on 15 May 2018, of the passage of 70 years since the tragic Nakbah of the Palestinian people in 1948, a grave historical injustice that continues today and continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. Immediate measures are vital for restoring the primacy of international law in the efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and make possible the establishment of just and lasting peace, whereby the Palestinian people can live in justice, dignity and peace and exercise their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and freedom, in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and whereby a just solution can be found for the plight of Palestine refugees based on General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

At this critical and sensitive moment, the Palestinian people and their leadership, alongside all those around the world who believe in international law and the path of justice as the most viable path to peace, are looking to the Security Council with high expectations for it to shoulder its responsibilities, in accordance with its Charter duties. We thus reiterate our appeal to the Council to act to end the occupation's brutality and massacres against our people; to bring a halt to its massive violations of their human rights; to ensure their protection; and to firmly uphold and implement all Security Council resolutions on the question of Palestine, including with regard to Jerusalem.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations

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General Assembly
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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 22 May 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

It has been a week since the 14 May massacre carried out by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip, in which at least 62 civilians were killed and more than 2,000 civilians injured, including children. As the traumatic causes and consequences of this heinous crime remain without remedy, tensions continue to rise and despair continues to deepen, threatening even further destabilization.

The fact remains that, despite our repeated appeals for urgent international action to deter Israel from its criminal behaviour towards the Palestinian people, the absence of serious efforts to hold the occupying Power accountable and reign it in has only made our people more vulnerable to the brutality of this illegal occupation. We are thus compelled to reiterate the call made at the 15 May emergency meeting of the Security Council, and countless times prior to that, for the protection of the Palestinian people, in compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law and numerous relevant resolutions, in particular concerning the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including children.

This call for protection has been echoed widely in the Security Council chamber and from capitals and humanitarian and human rights organizations worldwide. It is a call to protect and ensure the safety and well-being of a defenceless civilian population being held captive under a more than half-century occupation and a more than decade-long blockade. It has equally been a call to rescue the tenets of international law, which are being shredded by the occupying Power and those shielding it from censure and aiding it in its criminality. The consequences have been, and continue to be, dire for the Palestinian people, compelling us to persistently raise the alarm on this matter.

In this regard, I must inform you that on 15 May, the day following the massacre, Israeli occupying forces shot and killed two more Palestinian civilians, Bilal Budeir Hussein al-Ashram, age 17, and Naser Ahmad Mahmoud Ghurab, age 51, and injured

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40 other civilians by live ammunition, including 7 children, a paramedic and a journalist. On 19 May, two Palestinian civilians succumbed to the wounds they had sustained from Israel live ammunition: Mouin Abdelhamid al-Saai, age 58, and Mohammed Mazin Alian, age 20. This brings the total number of Palestinian civilians killed to 108, including 15 children, since the Great March of Return began on 30 March.

There is an abundance of evidence that these killings were deliberate and not the result of some kind of oversight or overreaction by the occupation forces. Indeed, many of those killed were shot in the back, with weapons designed to induce maximum damage to the human body, and many were hundreds of metres from the fence: men, women, children, journalists and paramedics posing no threat whatsoever.

In this regard, it must be pointed out that Israeli army spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Jonathan Conricus stated of Palestinian protesters, "We shoot in order to stop them so that they cannot harm the security infrastructure and infiltrate into Israel", a direct admission that the use of snipers and live fire to shoot protesters was not to prevent an imminent threat to life.

Amnesty International has described the killings on 14 May as "another horrific example of the Israeli military using excessive force and live ammunition in a totally deplorable way. This is a violation of international standards, with Israeli forces in some instances committing what appear to be wilful killings constituting war crimes."

A spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated that "The rules on the use of force under international law have been repeated many times but appear to have been ignored again and again. It seems anyone is liable to be shot dead or injured: women, children, press personnel, first responders, bystanders, and at almost any point up to 700 m from the fence." Journalists and human rights observers have further described "individual snipers safely ensconced hundreds of feet, even farther, away, targeting individual protesters and executing them one at a time" (Human Rights Watch).

As firmly expressed by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, at the 15 May Security Council meeting: "There is no justification for the killing. There is no excuse." Yet, some statements at the Council meeting tried to do just that — to justify the massacre. It was extremely disheartening to hear in those remarks the obscene accusation that Palestinians are somehow responsible for their own deaths. Since when does the victim bring about the act of his or her own victimization?

Had the victims of brutal massacres such as the ones witnessed on 14 May and over the past seven weeks been non-Palestinian, non-Arab, would some countries have dared accuse these victims of staging their own deaths? Of being responsible for their own suffering? Would the Security Council have been deaf to their cries for freedom? Would it have been unable to issue a statement merely calling for the respect of international law, an end to the slaughter and an investigation into the killing and wounding of so many civilians?

Statements illustrating this dehumanization of the Palestinian people include a United States government spokesperson calling the killing of Palestinians "a propaganda attempt". Gilad Erdan, Israel's Minister of Strategic Affairs, referred to Palestinian protesters in Gaza as "Nazis" twice on 14 May. An Israeli government spokesperson also "explained" that the use of live fire and the execution of Palestinian protesters in Gaza is taking place because Israel "can't put all these people in jail". In this regard, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has expressed concern about the "rise of racist hate speech and incitement to racist

violence against Palestinians by Israeli governmental officials and members of the Israeli Security Forces".

Palestinians, like all other human beings, deserve the attention and action of the international community and must be accorded protection in line with international law. The message should not be sent that their lives are dispensable, not worthy of the international community's time, not worthy of even a statement by the Security Council. To those who doubt, we repeat: Palestinian lives matter too. We grieve the lives of all who have been lost. The names of the Palestinian civilian protesters executed on 14 May are the following:

1. Laila Anwar al-Ghandoor, 8 months old
2. Ezz el-din Musa Mohamed Alsamaak, age 14
3. Wisaal Fadl Ezzat Alsheikh Khalil, age 15
4. Ahmed Adel Musa Alshaer, age 16
5. Saeed Mohamed Abu Alkheir, age 16
6. Saadi Said Fahmi Abu Salah, age 16
7. Talal Adel Ibrahim Mattar, age 16
8. Ibrahim Ahmed Alzarqa, age 18
9. Abdulrahman Sami Abu Mattar, age 18
10. Bilal Badeer Hussein al-Ashram, age 18
11. Eman Ali Sadiq Alsheikh, age 19
12. Kamil Jihad Kamil Mihna, age 19
13. Zayid Mohamed Hasan Omar, age 19
14. Motassem Fawzy Abu Louley, age 20
15. Anas Hamdan Salim Qadeeh, age 21
16. Ali Mohamed Ahmed Khafajah, age 21
17. Mohamed Abd Alsalam Harz, age 21
18. Mahmoud Wael Mahmoud Jundeyah, age 21
19. Yehia Ismail Rajab Aldaqoor, age 22
20. Mustafa Mohamed Samir Mahmoud Almasry, age 22
21. Ezz Eldeen Nahid Aloyutey, age 23
22. Mahmoud Mustafa Ahmed Assaf, age 23
23. Mokhtar Kaamil Salim Abu Khamash, age 23
24. Mahmoud Saber Hamad Abu Taeemah, age 23
25. Ahmed Fayez Harb Shahadah, age 23
26. Ahmed Awad Allah, age 24
27. Ahmed Zahir Hamid Alshawa, age 24
28. Mahmoud Yahya Abdawahab Hussain, age 24
29. Khalil Ismail Khalil Mansor, age 25
30. Mohamed Hasan Mustafa Alabadilah, age 25

31. Mohamed Ashraf Abu Sitta, age 26
32. Bilal Ahmed Abu Diqah, age 26
33. Ahmed Salim Alyaan Aljarf, age 26
34. Ahmed Majed Qaasim Ata Allah, age 27
35. Mohamed Samir Duwedar, age 27
36. Ahmed Mohammed Ibrahim Hamdan, age 27
37. Ahmed Mahmoud Mohammed Alrantisi, age 27
38. Mahmoud Rabah Abu Maamar, age 28
39. Musab Yousef Abu Leilah, age 28
40. Ahmed Fawzy Altetr, age 28
41. Mohamed Abdelrahman Meqdad, age 28
42. Alaa Alnoor Ahmed Alkhatib, age 28
43. Obaidah Salim Farhan, age 30
44. Jihad Mufid al-Farra, age 30
45. Ismail Khalil Ramadhan Aldaahuk, age 30
46. Omar Jomaa Abu Ful, age 30
47. Ahmed Abdullah Aladini, age 30
48. Fadi Hassan Abu Salah, age 30
49. Motaz Bassam Kamil al-Nunu, age 31
50. Mohammed Riyad Abdulrahman Alamudi, age 31
51. Jihad Mohammed Othman Mousa, age 31
52. Shahir Mahmoud Mohammed Almadhoon, age 32
53. Mahmoud Sulayman Ibrahim Aql, age 32
54. Mohammed Hani Hosni Alnajjar, age 33
55. Fadl Mohamed Ata Habshy, age 34
56. Mousa Jabr Abdulsalam Abu Hasnayn, age 35
57. Mohammed Mahmoud Abdulmoti Abdal'al, age 39
58. Abdelsalam Yousef Abdelwahab, age 39
59. Nasser Ahmed Mahmoud Ghrab, age 51

60–62. Unidentified

Additionally, more than 12,600 Palestinian civilians have been injured throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory since the protests began. Of those injured, most have required hospitalization, with many still in serious or critical condition. Among them are more than 3,500 who have been shot with live ammunition, many of whom will be disabled for life.

In this regard, Doctors without Borders stated on 14 May that "What happened today is unacceptable and inhuman. ... It is unbearable to witness such a massive number of unarmed people being shot in such a short time. ... This bloodbath is the continuation of the Israeli army's policy during the last seven weeks: shooting with

live ammunition at demonstrators, on the assumption that anyone approaching the separation fence is a legitimate target. Most of the wounded will be condemned to suffer lifelong injuries."

The mass influx of injuries has led the already crumbling health-care system in Gaza to be placed under such strain that it is now "near breaking point", according to Medical Aid for Palestinians, a United Kingdom-based non-governmental organization working on the ground in Gaza. As stated by a spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Those suffering life-threatening injuries face a nightmarish scenario in the absence of adequate hospital beds and medical services. We are still witnessing cases in which injured demonstrators are effectively prevented by Israel from exiting Gaza for treatment."

The United Nations Coordinator for Humanitarian and Development Activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Jamie McGoldrick, expressed on 17 May that "Medicines and supplies are being depleted, with few resources to replenish them. Our ability to reach affected families, including children, and provide assistance is extremely limited due to funding shortfalls. Without new funding, the impact on the survivors of recent events will be far worse and our ability to respond to any new needs will be severely limited." These new needs are developing in the context of the pre-existing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza caused by over a decade of Israeli blockade and repeated Israeli military aggressions.

To compound this appalling reality, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued targeting medical staff and equipment. According to the World Health Organization, 1 medical staff member has been killed and 229 injured while providing treatment to the wounded since the start of the protests on 30 March. Thirty-two ambulances have also been damaged.

The paramedic who was killed, Musa Abuhassanin, was shot in the chest while rescuing another victim under fire. He had just come back from treating Dr. Tarek Loubani, a Canadian, Ontario-based physician, who was shot and wounded on 14 May while wearing "full hospital greens" and standing with a group of other medical professionals away from the main protest area, but in view of three Israeli sniper outposts.

Those who have not been killed while peacefully protesting in Gaza continue to die a slow death as a result of Israel's continued cruel blockade of Gaza, which has entered its eleventh year. For example, the world's leading authority on Gaza's economy, Sara Roy, has stated that "Innocent human beings, most of them young, are slowly being poisoned by the water they drink", as 95 per cent of Gaza's water resources have become unfit for human consumption.

Against this backdrop of criminal activity in Gaza, we witnessed another obscenity a week ago, on 14 May: the juxtaposition of United States and Israeli officials celebrating their violations of international law during the opening of the United States Embassy in Jerusalem with the images of bloodshed as innocent civilians were being massacred about 40 miles away in Gaza. We reiterate that, through its provocative and illegal decision, in blatant contravention of Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 2334 (2016), and the unequivocal prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force, the United States has aggravated this situation and further emboldened Israeli impunity to persist with its violations of international law and emboldened other States, including Guatemala and Paraguay, to flout international law and United Nations resolutions.

The international community must not remain silent in the face of this illegal and unjust situation. In the light of Israel's wilful killing and maiming of unarmed

protesters in Gaza, we again call for international protection for the Palestinian people as a matter of urgency.

We welcome the 18 May decision of the Human Rights Council to establish an independent, international commission of inquiry, with a view to investigating all cases of death and injury since 30 March and ensuring accountability for the violations of international law that took place in the context of the large-scale civilian protests in Gaza. This investigation must be just the start of efforts at the United Nations to bring an end to the illegal occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, to the illegal blockade of Gaza and to the decades of dispossession of Palestine refugees, all of which constitute the root causes of this ongoing crisis and the brutality we have witnessed in the past month.

We also appeal to all States to continue their vital humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, especially in view of the medical emergency in Gaza, and to increase their support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which, beyond provision of assistance, remains a lifeline for so many vulnerable refugees in the absence of a just solution and amid the growing despair and uncertainty about the future.

Despite the decades of oppression faced by the Palestinian people, we remain committed to ensuring their rights, justice and human dignity, and remain convinced that peaceful means and international legality will lead to an end to their suffering. In these days of mourning, we once again call upon the international community, with the Security Council at the forefront, to act, in line with legal obligations and commitments, to address this crisis and reinforce the value and integrity of international law, as well as our faith in the international system.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 635 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 14 May 2018 (A/ES-10/781-S/2018/458), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terror and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations

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Tenth emergency special session
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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 25 May 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Tensions continue to rise and the situation continues to deteriorate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as Israel, the occupying Power, persists with its military aggressions and human rights violations against the Palestinian people. Israeli settlement activities, the blockade and targeting of civilians of the Gaza Strip, home demolitions, evictions, military raids, inflammatory rhetoric and provocations not only continue but are rapidly escalating.

The death toll from Israel's deliberate and lethal attacks on civilian protesters in the Gaza Strip in particular continues to rise as several of the victims have succumbed to their wounds since the time of our previous letter to you. Thousands of injured civilians also continue to be in need of emergency medical care, intensifying the demand on Gaza's extremely overstretched and depleted health-care system and further highlighting the deep trauma and human cost being borne by countless innocent civilians and their families in the aftermath of these attacks by the Israeli occupying forces, in grave breach of international law.

At the same time, Israel, the occupying Power, persists with its seizure and colonization of Palestinian land in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, also in grave breach of international law and in deliberate defiance and violation of Security Council resolutions. As reaffirmed by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in his briefing to the Security Council on 23 May 2018, settlement construction and expansion in particular in Occupied East Jerusalem and the surrounding areas continue unabated, further fragmenting the contiguity of our land and further destroying whatever viability may be left of the two-State solution.

All these unlawful and destructive actions are exacerbating the already critical and fragile conditions on the ground, creating further despair among the Palestinian civilian population and leaving no doubt whatsoever regarding Israel's rejection of the most basic tenets of international law and the pillars of a just peace, which the

Please recycle

State of Palestine still remains committed to achieving, along with the rest of the international community.

In this regard, I must draw your attention to the provocative announcement two days ago by Israeli Minister Avigdor Lieberman of the intention to implement plans for the immediate construction of 2,500 units in at least 30 illegal settlements throughout the occupied West Bank. In addition, plans have been announced for another 1,400 units to follow, bringing the total to 3,900 units, entailing the transfer of thousands upon thousands more illegal Israeli settlers to our land.

Such actions constitute further flagrant violations of international law by the occupying Power, including of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), and the consistent global calls upon Israel to cease completely its illegal, destructive settlement campaign in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. These violations must be roundly and unequivocally condemned, and Israel must be demanded to immediately and completely cease these illegal acts.

These repeated declarations by Israeli officials and the pursuit of such schemes underscore yet again the true nature of Israel's colonialism, expansionism and lawlessness. Israel is blatantly seeking to enlarge its extremist settler population and superimpose "Greater Israel" on all of historic Palestine, working non-stop to de facto annex large areas of land in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Regrettably, the recent provocative and unlawful moves by the United States, Guatemala and Paraguay have only further emboldened Israel to continue with its illegal settlement enterprise, regardless of international law, regardless of the international consensus and regardless of the consequences.

Today, we are also compelled to draw your attention to the dangerous intensification of the dehumanization of the Palestinian people in Israeli rhetoric, as well as in some statements delivered at the Security Council.

While since 30 March 117 unarmed Palestinian civilian protesters have been shot dead by Israeli occupation forces and over 13,000 people injured, many of whom have been severely and permanently debilitated, the occupying Power continues to illogically and brazenly insist that it is the victim and that it is the one being endangered by the defenceless civilian population it is occupying. We absolutely reject such claims and this absurd and demeaning narrative, which is totally contradicted by the high number of Palestinian casualties and even the kinds of wounds sustained by thousands of innocent Palestinian civilians, including children, at the hands of the Israeli occupying forces.

It has been reported by several international organizations, including human rights groups, that the types of wounds sustained by those killed or injured by Israeli snipers reveal that the bullets used against protesters had been designed with the intent to kill. On hunting websites, 7.6 mm bullets are advertised as being "designed to mushroom and fragment" and "to do maximum internal damage to the animal". Such ammunition has been used by Israeli snipers against unarmed Palestinian men, women and children protesting for their rights.

According to the Medical Aid for Palestinians organization: "The majority of injuries have been to people's legs, and in many cases there is a very real risk of amputation. ... the kinds of wounds they have suffered will potentially maim them for life." The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) also confirmed that "the demonstrators had been systematically shot either in the lower limbs (shattering femurs, knees and ankles), in the abdomen, the back or the head" and that the health-care system in Gaza had reached "a breaking point", with Gaza facing "a major human and health-care disaster".

Despite the plethora of evidence presented by human rights organizations and paramedics and journalists working on the ground, and by eyewitness accounts and video footage, describing and showing Israeli snipers, tanks and drones targeting peaceful Palestinian protesters, it is deeply regrettable and worrying that some States seem to believe that Israel is capable of no harm and that the harm done to Palestinians must have been provoked by and a result of their own doing.

This reflects layers upon layers and years upon years of the dehumanization of the Palestinian people, whereby the actions of Palestinians cannot be seen merely as those of human beings seeking freedom, but rather are seen through a distorted prism of terrorism. A Palestinian child, woman or man holding a Palestinian flag and asking for basic human rights is classified either as a terrorist or as having been manipulated by a terrorist. There is no third alternative: that these people are simply humans, like everyone else in this world, wanting to live normal, ordinary lives, in freedom, in peace, away from occupation and away from the decades of dispossession, deprivation and captivity that they have been forced to endure.

This tragic reality was starkly reflected in the statement of 18 May by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding Palestinians protesting: "But they are, in essence, caged in a toxic slum from birth to death; deprived of dignity; dehumanized by the Israeli authorities to such a point it appears officials do not even consider that these men and women have a right, as well as every reason, to protest."

Recognizing this phenomenon, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA stressed, at a press briefing in Gaza City on 22 May, that: "Dehumanizing an entire community will bring no peace to the region. Recognizing that Palestine refugees have the same rights and aspirations as everyone on this planet, that they have the right to live safely, in freedom, with adequate and essential services and opportunities, is essential." Furthermore, Lakhdar Brahimi of The Elders recalled that: "Palestinians have the right to fight for their rights with all the legitimate means available to them. This includes peaceful protest; Palestinians in Gaza are just as entitled to exercise this right as Israelis in Tel Aviv or Americans in Washington."

Here we must also recall that such protests against Israeli oppression are not new. Palestinians have been protesting and rejecting the unbearable conditions they have been facing for the past 70 years across the decades, desperately seeking to call attention to their plight. The attempt to connect all Palestinian protesters to one particular political group or to claim that they are being manipulated by one group is therefore not only inaccurate but also provocative, insulting and dismissive of their long-standing call for freedom and justice and for the rights they continue to be so cruelly denied.

Such systematic dehumanization of the Palestinian people compels us to insist on the humanity of the Palestinian people, which is being so callously dismissed. Palestinians, like their fellow human beings, are a people who cannot endure decades of violent oppression, domination and control by the Israeli occupation forces without at least voicing their rejection of this injustice, including by means of peaceful protest. It is not strange but rather normal and should be expected under the circumstances that Palestinians would rise up to protest the unbearable conditions forced upon them. There is no justification for a country to lay siege to millions of people and to kill and maim them when they dare to call for freedom.

In this regard, it must also be stressed that the shooting of peaceful protesters in Gaza is certainly not the first time that Israel has targeted and terrorized civilians, but rather follows a long pattern of Israeli violence and terror against Palestinian civilians. It has done so prior to and since its inception, including through terrorist groups such as the Irgun and the Haganah. In fact, in 2009, the United Nations Fact-

Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict concluded that the objective of Israel's military assaults on Gaza was to punish, humiliate and terrorize the civilian population.

The destructive impact of the above-mentioned violations is immense. This cannot be overemphasized in a situation marked by rising tensions, deteriorating socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions and deepening anger and despair among the Palestinian people living under this more than half-century occupation. We call yet again on the international community, including the Security Council, to ensure protection for the Palestinian people, to undertake serious and concrete measures to bring about a full cessation of all settlement activities and to hold Israel accountable for all its crimes before it is too late and the prospects for a just peace evaporate. In this regard, recent events further affirm the imperative need for the International Criminal Court to open an immediate criminal investigation into Israel's flagrant violations of international law.

This is a matter of urgency. It can no longer suffice to condemn or simply be appalled by Israel's illegal actions; practical measures are necessary to bring an end to Israel's occupation. The Security Council must immediately act to uphold its duties under the Charter of the United Nations and implement its own resolutions, without exception. This is the first and most vital step for signalling to the occupying Power that its defiance will no longer be tolerated and for compelling a halt to Israel's violations, creating an environment conducive to the dialogue and negotiations needed to bring about an end to this monumental injustice so that the Palestinian people can finally live in freedom and dignity in their own independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Despite the decades of oppression faced by the Palestinian people, we remain committed to justice, to human dignity and to the conviction that peaceful diplomatic, political and popular means and international legality will lead to an end of our suffering. We trust that one day our steadfastness in the midst of this oppression will be seen as a tremendous inspiration that, despite everything, we managed to live with dignity and uphold the values of the international legal system.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 636 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 22 May 2018 (A/ES-10/782-S/2018/485) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

United Nations A/ES-10/784–S/2018/510

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Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 29 May 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Since 30 March 2018, we have been repeatedly compelled to draw your attention to the illegal actions being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people, in particular in the Gaza Strip in the context of the Great March of Return. Such criminal actions by the occupying Power, including the lethal use of force against unarmed civilian protesters, have exacerbated the already-severe protection crisis being endured by our people and risk the further ratcheting-up of tensions and destabilization of the situation, with grave consequences.

It is urgent that the international community act, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant resolutions, to immediately address this situation in order to de-escalate this dangerous situation, to deter further violence and to protect civilian lives. In this regard, we reiterate our unequivocal stance against any and all forms of violence against civilians.

Today's cycle of violence underscores the urgency of action. Throughout the day, Israel has launched numerous air strikes against the occupied and besieged Gaza Strip, threatening to fully ignite another round of deadly violence and further threatening international peace and security. We condemn in the strongest terms these Israeli military attacks on the densely populated Gaza Strip, which are further endangering civilian lives and causing damage and destruction to civilian property, including, inter alia, a school.

This escalation in violence follows weeks of Israeli aggression against Palestinian civilian protesters in Gaza, in which Israeli occupying forces killed 118 Palestinians, including children. One of the victims, Nasser Aaref al-Ureini, age 28, succumbed to his wounds just yesterday, 28 May, raising the death toll. A total of 13,000 Palestinians have been injured, with many requiring further surgery and medical treatment and many disabled for life. Today's escalation also follows the killing of four other Palestinians in Gaza by Israeli tank fire yesterday, 28 May, which provoked today's cycle of violence.

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Moreover, it cannot be forgotten that this escalation is happening against the backdrop of more than 50 years of Israel's foreign occupation and brutal repression, collective punishment and the humiliation of the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza through a suffocating, illegal and inhumane air, land and sea blockade.

In this regard, we must remind you that Israel is the occupying Power, having committed, and continuing to commit, an endless list of atrocities and war crimes against the Palestinian people that it has occupied, besieged and oppressed for decades. We should never blur the lines between legal actions that can be taken by States to ensure security, in line with the Charter and international law, and actions that, in fact, constitute violations of international law and war crimes. There can be no justification for Israel's continued illegal occupation of and aggression against our people, nor for its illegal blockade of Gaza, nor for its continued colonization of our land.

Furthermore, Israel cannot claim a right to security for the occupying Power while callously denying the occupied people their right to security. In this regard, we have stated repeatedly and reiterate once more: the right to security is not exclusive to Israel, but rather a right for all, including the Palestinian people.

Statements by Israeli officials are foreboding and must not be ignored. This includes recent statements by the Prime Minister of Israel, who has pledged to use "great force" against Gaza, and by the Israeli intelligence minister, who has stated that Israel was "closest to the threshold of war" since 2014. Such inflammatory statements and incitement reveal the true intentions of the occupying Power to intensify its actions and plunge the area into another deadly and destructive cycle of violence, regardless of the consequences and with total disregard for the calls for the immediate cessation of violence and de-escalation of the situation.

Such threats of further escalation will only ensure the loss of more innocent civilian lives among the occupied and defenceless Palestinian population. It will only lead to the further deterioration of the already-dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where nearly 2 million Palestinians continue to live in deep isolation and deprivation and have still not recovered from the effects of the massive human devastation and physical destruction caused by previous Israeli military aggressions against Gaza, as well as from the mass casualties sustained as a result of Israel's shooting of peaceful Palestinian protesters over the past few weeks.

We call on the international community, including the Security Council, to act forthwith to bring an immediate halt to this escalation of violence and to demand that Israel, the occupying Power, fully and scrupulously abide by its legal obligations under the Charter and as an occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

At this time, I must also draw your attention to the continuation of Israel's illegal colonization of Palestinian land, including the destruction, theft and confiscation of Palestinian lands and properties, the construction and expansion of both settlements and the Wall, and the forcible transfer of Palestinian communities in a continuation of our ongoing dispossession and Nakbah.

In this regard, the recent period has seen measures aimed at the forcible transfer of Palestinian Bedouin communities from within and around Occupied East Jerusalem, including the sensitive "E-1" area, for the construction and expansion of settlements. These measures not only are in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, thus constituting war crimes, but also threaten to completely sever the West Bank from East Jerusalem, destroying any chance of implementing the two-State solution.

For years, Israel has been advancing its plans to forcibly transfer the Bedouin population of the Khan al-Ahmar area north-east of Occupied East Jerusalem, the

majority of whom are Palestine refugees, in order to facilitate the expansion of its illegal settlements. We have drawn the attention of the international community to this urgent situation numerous times, including in regard to the repeated demolition by Israeli occupation forces of Khan al-Ahmar's makeshift homes and schools. Regrettably, our calls have never been met with concrete action aimed at deterring the occupying Power from the perpetration of these crimes.

On 24 May, the Israeli so-called Supreme Court approved the demolition and forcible transfer of the entire community of Khan al-Ahmar Abu al-Helu, home to 35 Palestinian families and with a total population of 180 civilians, for the purpose of constructing thousands of new illegal settlement units. According to the Israeli plan, the community will most likely be forcibly relocated to an area near a landfill in Abu Dis. The Palestinian structures set for demolition include a primary school, which was built in 2009 by the Italian aid organization Vento Di Terra and serves 170 children from five different Bedouin communities in the East Jerusalem area.

The cumulative result of all of these ongoing illegal Israeli policies and actions is the deepening of the protection crisis being endured by the Palestinian civilian population. We thus renew our call on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to uphold its obligations under the Charter, international law and all relevant resolutions pertaining to the rights and protection of civilians in armed conflict, including foreign occupation. We reiterate that the Palestinian civilian population under Israel's occupation, including in the Gaza Strip, must be guaranteed protection and cannot remain the exception to the obligations and commitments made to protect civilians in all circumstances from atrocities and flagrant breaches of the law.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 637 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432–S/2000/921) to 25 May 2018 (A/ES-10/783–S/2018/505), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 5 June 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

On this sombre fifty-first anniversary of Israel's occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories in 1967, I am compelled to write to you once again to draw the international community's attention to the violent crimes and human rights violations that continue to be endured by the Palestinian people as a result of this illegal and belligerent Israeli military occupation.

It is astounding and deeply tragic that — despite the passage of more than a half-century of Israel's occupation and the passage of 70 years of the dispossession, displacement and oppression of the Palestinian people in an ongoing and cruel Nakbah — not only has the international community failed to mobilize to redress this unlawful situation, from its root causes to the crises that we witness today, but it has also allowed the situation to further deteriorate, with regression of both the conditions on the ground and the prospects for achieving a just and peaceful solution.

As the suffering of our people has intensified in recent weeks and months, their faith in the international community and international law to protect them and preserve their rights from Israel's relentless onslaught has been even more severely diminished. Yet again, despite their appeals and hopes, the Security Council failed to act to address their worsening plight, particularly in the Gaza Strip, owing to the veto cast by the United States on the draft resolution that was presented by Kuwait in its capacity as the Arab representative on the Council.

The United States veto obstructed the efforts by conscientious members of the Council to uphold their duties under the Charter of the United Nations with action aimed at addressing the current crisis and ensuring the safety, protection and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. As many have cautioned, rather than contributing to the protection of civilians, the outcome of the vote will undoubtedly further foster Israel's impunity and belief that it is above the law, emboldening its illegal and brutal behaviour.

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This was painfully borne out on the day of the vote in the Security Council, on 1 June, as Israel, the occupying Power, continued its vicious attacks against unarmed Palestinian civilians participating in the "Great March of Return" to protest against the systematic violation of their human rights, to demand an end to Israeli occupation and blockade and to call for independence, freedom and the return to their ancestral lands. The total number of Palestinians killed since this protest began on 30 March has reached 119, including 14 children.

For the tenth week in a row, the Israeli military deliberately unleashed force against defenceless civilians. On 1 June, this resulted in the killing in cold blood of a young woman, Razan Ashraf al-Najjar, age 21, who had been volunteering as a medic to treat wounded civilian protesters during the weeks of the Great March of Return demonstrations in the Gaza Strip. An Israeli sniper shot and killed Razan as she and other first responders walked towards the boundary fence with their arms visibly raised on their way to treat and evacuate injured protesters.

She was shot in the chest despite the fact that she was wearing a white vest with the red emblem of the Palestinian Medical Relief Society clearly marking her as medical personnel. Razan's reputation was that of an "angel of mercy", owing to her dedication to saving lives, yet her life was ended by this criminal occupation.

It is inexcusable that such brutality, equivalent, in every meaning of the word, to terrorism, should continue to take place in full view of the international community with total impunity. That an occupying Power should feel shielded from any accountability or consequence in a situation where it is clearly and deliberately massacring innocent civilians, children, women and men, violating the most basic principles of international law and human morality, threatens to destroy the credibility of the international system, the very existence of which emanated from a desire to stop mass atrocity crimes and maintain international peace and security.

As stated by the United Nations Coordinator for Humanitarian and Development Activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Jamie McGoldrick, "the killing of a clearly-identified medical staffer by security forces during a demonstration is particularly reprehensible" and "it is difficult to see how it squares with Israel's obligation as occupying power to ensure the welfare of the population of Gaza". The head of the World Health Organization office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Dr. Gerald Rockenschaub, highlighted: "Such attacks on health care must not happen and we need to enhance our efforts to ensure the protection of our frontline health workers. There are clear obligations to safeguard healthcare under international law and these must be respected."

This latest war crime follows a series of attacks by Israeli occupation forces targeting health-care personnel and equipment. Between 30 March and 27 May, 2 health workers were killed and 245 injured by Israeli attacks, and 40 ambulances were damaged.

On 1 June, Israeli forces also injured 100 civilians, including 30 by live ammunition, bringing the total number of Palestinian civilians wounded and injured throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory to more than 13,000, including women and children, since the protests began.

This chronic and massive pressure on Gaza's health system, which has been weakened and made extremely vulnerable by more than a decade of Israeli blockade, has led the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to dispatch two teams of conflict and trauma surgeons and medical supplies to Gaza to deal with the health crisis, starting as a priority with the treatment of about 1,350 gunshot victims in need of several operations each.

As described by the ICRC director, Robert Mardini, "imagine, 1,350 people with complex cases who will need 3 to 5 operations each, a total of 4,000 surgeries, half of which will be carried out by ICRC teams. I think such a caseload would overwhelm any health system in the world, including in Geneva". Mr. Mardini further described Gaza as a "sinking ship" that is "suffocating" and experiencing a "health crisis of unprecedented magnitude".

We recognize and commend ICRC, along with Médecins sans frontières and the many other humanitarian organizations that are working alongside our health-care workers and the United Nations, particularly the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to provide medical care to so many Palestinians at this time of great need. We appeal to all States to continue their vital humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, especially during this medical crisis in Gaza with the health sector at the brink of collapse and in the light of the deepening humanitarian crisis, and urge in particular an increase in support to UNRWA so that it can continue uninterrupted its indispensable assistance, including emergency services, to Palestine refugees.

The international community must recognize this disastrous situation for what it is. This is a man-made crisis that will only continue to worsen if immediate measures are not taken to reign in Israel, the occupying Power, and bring a halt to its unlawful actions. It is unacceptable that, despite all that has come to pass and despite the countless calls for the protection of the Palestinian people by States and humanitarian and human rights organizations worldwide, one Security Council member continues to justify the lawlessness and cruelty of Israel's military occupation and, alone, to absolve Israel of its crimes. The veto cast last Friday by the United States once again provided Israel with cover to pursue its assault on the Palestinian people and on international law. Moreover, it dealt yet another blow to the credibility and integrity of the Council and its capacity to uphold its mandate to ensure international peace and security.

We thus appeal again to the international community to act quickly and responsibly to prevent further assaults by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinian civilians. We call upon the international community to publicly condemn Israel's killing of Palestinian civilians, including Razan al-Najjar, the most recent victim of the Israeli onslaught, and also to condemn all of its previous deliberate killings and maiming of health-care personnel, as well as journalists.

We further urge public calls to demand that Israel be held accountable for its crimes under international law. Palestinians, like all other human beings, deserve the attention and action of the international community and must be afforded the protections of international law and not be excluded from them. The message should not be sent that their lives are dispensable, not worth the time of the international community, not worth protecting.

Despite the obstruction in the Security Council, we continue to reiterate our calls, and will persist in our efforts, for the protection of the Palestinian people, in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law and the many relevant resolutions aimed at protecting and ensuring the safety and well-being of a defenceless civilian population being held captive under a more than half-century occupation and more than 11-year blockade. This must be just the start of efforts at the United Nations to bring an end to the illegal occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, to the illegal blockade of Gaza and to the decades of dispossession of Palestine refugees, all of which constitute the root causes of the ongoing brutality witnessed since 30 March.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 638 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which

constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 29 May 2018 (A/ES-10/784-S/2018/510), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

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(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
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